

Family History.

CLARK JILLSON:

HIS

Ancestors and Descendants.

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BY A MEMBER OF

The Worcester Society of Antiquity.

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WORCESTER:

PRESS OF CLARK JILLSON.

1879.

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## Clark Gillson and his Ancestors.

THE name GILLSON, now called JILLSON, was first known in France, especially in the Province of Normandy; but it was not known in England previous to the Norman conquest. The first person bearing that name in England, came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror, A. D. 1066; and it is claimed that Leicestershire was originally a park belonging to him.

The first Gillson known in America was William, who came from the county of Kent, England, and settled in Scituate, Mass., in 1633. He probably came over in Winthrop's fleet, three years before.

He was a man of considerable note in public matters, being one of the Governor's Assistants in 1633, and one of the founders of the Church in Scituate, in 1635. He was also a Mechanic, and built the first wind-mill in the Colony, for grinding corn.

His mill was one of the institutions of the town, but the miller's "fulness of joy" evidently consisted in the "fulness of things;" the sealer of weights and measures not having arrived from the old country. The law makers, in 1637, favored their constituents with an Act in relation to his mill, as follows:—

"It is enacted that y<sup>e</sup> miller of Scituate shall not take above y<sup>e</sup> twelvth part for y<sup>e</sup> toul for grinding corn."

The effect of this enactment upon the moral turpitude of the miller has probably never been put on record. He died Feb 1, 1639, leaving a wife but no children.

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#### JAMES GILLSON.

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James Gillson appeared in Rehoboth, Mass., sometime in 1667, but there is no known record of his departure from England, or of his arrival in America. He purchased land in what is now South Attleboro, the same being the homestead farm where he lived and died. The spot where his log house was built is known at the present day, although more than two hundred years have intervened.

His house was burned by the Indians in 1676, he being fortunately absent at the time. Mary, his wife, was washing at a spring near by, with Nathaniel, then an infant, but was not discovered.

She managed to escape with her child, and finally reached the Garrison in Rehoboth, six miles away.

Their children were, Nathaniel, born Jan. 24th, 1675; Mary, born Feb. 27th, 1680; and James, born Nov. 18th, 1684. The father and mother died about the same time, in 1712, respected by the community in which they lived, and their tomb stones may now be seen in the old burial ground at South Attleboro.

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#### NATHANIEL GILLSON.

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Nathaniel Gillson, born at South Attleboro, Jan. 24th, 1675, was by trade a cooper, and also a farmer. The name of his wife was Elizabeth, and they were married about the year 1700, but the names of her parents are unknown. The children of Nathaniel and Elizabeth were, Nathaniel Jr., Uriah, Martha, Pricilla and Elizabeth. He is supposed to have been living with his son, Nathaniel Jr., at the time of his death, May 9th, 1751. The house then occupied by these families, built 150 years ago, is still standing, and has always been owned and occupied by the descendants of Nathaniel to the present time. The estate is now owned and occupied by Ranselier A. Jillson, a great, great grandson of Nathaniel.

Nathaniel and his wife, in their deed to Benjamin Day, dated December 18, 1712, signed their names



*Gilson*, but in the Proprietors' land records of Dedham Gore, under date of May 19th, 1714, the Clerk entered his name *Jillson*, and it has been generally so written by the descendants of Nathaniel to the present time.

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NATHANIEL JILLSON, JR.

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Nathaniel Jillson, Jr., married for his first wife, Ruth Boyce, of Mendon, Mass., April 20th, 1728. He was married to his second wife, Sarah Arnold, May 14th, 1741.

His children by his first wife were, Jonathan, born June 29th, 1729; Susannah, born Dec. 31st, 1730; Mary, born July 11th, 1733, and David, born Oct. 28th, 1735. David was accidentally killed, at the age of 15, by the upsetting of a load of boards near Woonsocket.

His children by his second wife were, Ruth, born Jan. 11th, 1742; Hannah, born Dec. 12th, 1743; Nathan, born Feb. 9th, 1746; Abner, born May 13th, 1748; Nathaniel, born Oct. 5th, 1749; Martha, born Feb. 19th, 1753; Luke, born March 2nd, 1754; Rhodia, born Sept. 24th, 1756, and Waite, born Feb. 6th, 1759.

He became the owner of extensive tracts of land in Bellingham, Cumberland and other places.

On the 27th day of April, 1774, he made his will, from which the following words are taken:—

“I give to my well beloved son, Jonathan Jillson, my lot of land lying in Richmond, in the province of New Hampshire, containing eighty acres, be it more or less, and is lot number seven in the fifteenth range; to be and remain to him, my said son, Jonathan Jillson, his heirs and assigns forever. I also give to my son Jonathan, two pounds lawful money, and the fourth part of my wearing apparel, to be paid and delivered to him by my executor hereinafter named, within one year after my decease.”

At the first town meeting in Cumberland, Feb. 10th, 1746, he was chosen one of the Overseers of the Poor; and for a long period of time he was prominent in town affairs, and held many public offices, being a member of the Town Council for several years. He died in Cumberland, April 17th, 1782.

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#### JONATHAN JILLSON.

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Jonathan Jillson, son of Nathaniel Jr., was born in Providence, (now Smithfield, R. I.,) Jan. 29th 1729. He married Chloe, daughter of James Cargill, of Smithfield, but resided in Cumberland until about 1763, when he removed with his family to Swansea, Mass., then to Gloucester, R. I., then to Buck Hill in Burrillville.

In 1773 he removed to Douglas, Mass., and from Douglas to Pomfret, Ct., where was located a manufacturing establishment known as Cargill's Mills, the proprietor being a son of James Cargill, of Smithfield. From Pomfret he removed to Paxton, Mass., from Paxton to Rutland, from Rutland to Royalston, and finally to Richmond, N. H. He made it a rule to move every year while on his way to New Hampshire, where his land was situated, which had been devised to him in 1774.

His children were, Neomi, born June 13th, 1753; Lydia, born Feb. 25th, 1755; Ruth, born April 4th, 1756; Orpah, born Sept. 6th, 1758; Lucy, born Oct. 21st, 1759; David, born Feb. 1st, 1761; Mary, born Dec. 13th, 1762; Jonathan, Jr., born in 1765, and Stephen, born June 6th, 1772.

When he reached Richmond and took possession of his land, the first labor to be performed was the building of a log house. The one he constructed was of a rude pattern, containing but two rooms and an attic, the latter being reached only by means of a ladder. The partition between the rooms consisted of a couple of bed quilts, suspended from a pole, upon which lay a few loose slabs constituting the chamber floor. The windows were without sash, and oiled paper was used instead of glass.

In this primitive hut resided a family of nine children—six of whom were girls—all probably happier than many a family now surrounded by the comforts of a higher civilization.



The father, though in humble circumstances, was a remarkable man in many respects. He not only built his house with his own hands, but performed nearly or quite all the mechanical work done in and about Richmond for several years. He made the first spinning-wheel manufactured in New Hampshire, and is said to have been the inventor of the clock-reel. He died at Richmond in June, 1803.

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DAVID JILLSON.

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David Jillson, son of Jonathan, was born in Cumberland, R. I., Feb. 1st, 1761, and went with the family as they slowly wended their way toward their possessions in New Hampshire.

At the age of 18 he became inspired with the patriotism of the time, and enlisted in the army then struggling for the Liberty of the American People. He was an excellent soldier, faithful and brave, performing his duty at all times, shunning no danger. He was stationed at West Point, and was one of Gen. Benedict Arnold's body guard at the time his treachery was discovered. The writer of this sketch has often heard him tell the story of the flight of Arnold. He stated that Arnold, when he heard Gen. Washington was approaching West Point, mounted his horse, turned around three times, hesitating as to which way he could best escape, and then rode

down a steep precipice among the rocks, to the river, where he entered a barge and was conveyed outside the lines. The place where he rode down was so steep that the soldiers were obliged to use a hand rail in carrying water up from the river, and the calks on the shoes of his horse made furrows in the rock, as he went down, which are probably to be seen at the present day.

At the close of his military service he returned to New Hampshire and devoted himself to Agricultural pursuits. On the second day of Nov., 1783, he was married to Joanna Thompson, of Richmond. On the third day of Dec., the same year, he purchased from John Ellis, Jr., a lot of land in Richmond, containing 29 acres, which he occupied until his removal to Guilford, Vt., in 1789. His wife lived only a few years; and in 1792 he was married to his second wife, Sarah Cudworth, of Rehoboth, Mass.

His children by his first wife were Mary, born June 30th, 1785; Thompson, born Feb. 18th, 1787; Polly, born in 1789. His children by his second wife were, Joel, born June 13th, 1793; Sally, born in 1795; Timothy, born March 11th 1796; Joanna, born Nov. 12th, 1798; David, Jr., born Sept. 19th, 1800; Stephen, born June 30th, 1804.

In 1789 he purchased of Simon Stevens, one hundred acres of land, for which he paid \$200. This farm was in Guilford, Vt., on Roaring Brook, formerly conveyed by Benning Wentworth to Thomas Warren, and from Warren to Stevens.

Here he resided until 1802, when he sold his farm and purchased another in the town of Whitingham, in the State of Vermont. This farm was situated about two and one half miles southwest from the centre of the town, on the road now discontinued, leading from Whitingham to Rowe, Mass. It had been owned by Mr. Samuel Day, who was one of the early settlers in that locality.

Mr. Jillson had been a carpenter from boyhood, and when he settled in Whitingham he built a shop wherein he made plows, rakes and other farm implements such as were in demand among the farmers.

On the 14th day of Jan., 1828, in consideration of eight hundred dollars, he conveyed his farm to his son David, with whom he and his wife were to have a home and be cared for in a proper and suitable manner during life. He continued to labor on the farm till he was nearly eighty years of age, rather than remain idle. His wife died June 19th, 1833, aged 69 years. She had always been a faithful companion and her death was much lamented.

His death occurred Aug. 27th, 1850, at the age of eighty-nine years. He was a man of good morals, sound judgment and unwavering integrity.

The house occupied by him in Whitingham, was torn down years ago; and when the Spring-time comes with its quickening breath, grass will grow undisturbed over the deserted hearth-stone; and nothing will remain to indicate where it stood, except one forlorn rose-bush that formerly occupied a



retired spot back of the old house, where it now repeats its annual display of crimson bud and blossom, under the delightful skies of each returning June.

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#### DAVID JILLSON, JUNIOR.

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David Jillson, Jr., was born in Guilford, Vt., Sept. 19th, 1800. His father having bought a farm in Whitingham, moved there in 1802, where David Jr. spent most of the remainder of his days, and became a much respected citizen. At the age of 28 he came in possession of his father's farm, by purchase, and thereupon commenced the labor of his life.

He was possessed of considerable mechanical skill, and assumed to be a blacksmith, carpenter, mason, boot and shoe maker, and general repairer of farm tools and implements for most of the farmers in the town. His principal trade, however, was that of a blacksmith, which occupation he followed until near the time of his death.

On the 5th day of July, 1824, he was married to Waity Williams, of Whitingham, Vt., who died April ~~25~~<sup>28</sup>th, 1825, at the age of 21 years. On the 15th day of May, 1828, he married his second wife, Polly Carley of Whitingham, who was born May 12th, 1804. His only child by his first wife was, Clark, born April 11th, 1825. His children by his second wife were, Lucy, who died in infancy; Waity, born Oct.



14th, 1829: Luana, born Nov. 1st, 1830; Mary, born Feb. 22d, 1832; George W., born Dec. 19th, 1833; Rinaldo E., born Jan. 18th, 1836; Matilda, born March 21st, 1841.

His life exhibited an example of industry seldom to be met with, and it was impossible for idleness to be comfortable in his presence, for he saw no way to prosperity but by means of constant labor. About the time his father's farm came into his possession, he built a blacksmith shop, and his time not otherwise employed, was spent in performing such labor as was required in making and mending agricultural tools, and doing the ordinary business generally carried on in a country shop of that kind. In this way his entire time was utilized, and the hired man found employment for a rainy day without serious effort. He soon became noted for the faithful manner in which he served his customers, to such an extent that his services were in great demand even by those residing ten miles away.

In 1827 he built a new house, only a few rods southeasterly from the one occupied by his father. This house is still in existence, but in a dilapidated condition, and ere long its site will exhibit no indications of having once been the abode of man. The spot where it stood will then tell no tale of the generations that made it merry in earlier times; but the verdure of Spring will spread its mantle over unseen foot-prints, and the snows of Winter obliterate the last familiar landmark of this ancient homestead.

Mr. Jillson was not an absolute tyrant in his family, but his discipline was severe; and when his authority had once been asserted, no plea could be entered for its modification. The boy and the man were treated alike, with no allowance for the inexperience of youth, or the diversity of intellectual attainment. His code was law; his word always meant submission without debate.

In 1846 he removed to Jacksonville, a village in Whitingham, where he spent the remainder of his life. He always enjoyed the confidence of his townsmen, and was often elevated to official position by their suffrages. He was a member of the board of Selectmen for the years 1842, 1843, 1855 and 1856. He served as Lister in 1855 and 1856, and Highway Surveyor in 1848, 1851 and 1859. He was Overseer of the Poor in 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, and 1865. In 1857 he was the Representative from Whitingham in the Legislature of Vermont.

He was a man who never resorted to deception for the purpose of making any enterprise a success; and all his dealings with the world had to be honorable, even though they were to his pecuniary disadvantage. He took a deep interest in public affairs, and was a liberal contributor to the support of good government and good morals.

In politics, he was a Whig, and then Republican; in religion, a Universalist; and the sincerity he manifested in the support of both, presented a true picture of his fidelity as a man.

His prejudices were not violent, and he possessed a spirit of forgiveness seldom to be found in a person of such a positive nature. Had he been favored with the advantages of a good education, and the influence of cultivated and refined society, his natural powers would undoubtedly have made him distinguished among his fellow men. After a brief illness he died at his residence in Whitingham, Feb. 8, 1871.

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#### CLARK JILLSON.

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Clark Jillson, son of David, Junior, and Waity (Williams) Jillson, was born at the old homestead, in Whitingham, Vt., April 11th, 1825. On the 28th day of the same month, his mother died, at the age of 21 years, leaving the child to be cared for by his grand-mother and other relatives and friends.

Previous to her death, she expressed a desire that her child might be named Clark, in token of her respect for a family of that name, then residing in Colraine, Mass. She had lived in this family as a servant, and their kindness to her was held in such grateful remembrance as to cause this peculiar request to be made. It is strange that this child and that family have never met; but those who listened to the dying words of that beautiful and true hearted woman, failed to comprehend their meaning, except so far as they related to the name of the



child, and at her decease perished, in their minds, the memory of her most devoted friends.

When Clark was four years of age, his uncle Stephen undertook to learn him the English alphabet, and after reading it over several times adjourned till the next morning, when, upon calling the boy's attention to his lesson, found that his scholar\* could repeat every letter with perfect accuracy. In the winter of 1833, he attended school in what was then known as the Kentfield District, having nearly two miles to walk, over hills and through forests, with no road except what three scholars made by passing over the ground twice each day. There were two houses on the way, one being within half a mile of his home, occupied by Mr. James Streeter, and the other within half a mile of the school house, occupied by Mr. Asa Streeter. Mr. James Streeter had two sons, Royal C., ten years of age, and Hiram, eight years of age; and Mr. Asa Streeter had several children, all of whom attended the same school.

On one occasion, in December of the year above mentioned, after snow had been falling rapidly all day, obliterating every trace of the path over which the boys had travelled in the morning, the wind shifted into the North-west and it became extremely cold, blowing a gale at four o'clock when the school was closed; and the air was so filled with newly fallen snow that it became almost impossible to pursue any well directed course. Asa Streeter appeared at the school house with an ox-sled and a large quantity of



blankets, to protect the children from the storm, and the passage as far as his house was more difficult for the oxen and their driver than for the scholars, who were well enveloped in blankets.\* Mr. Streeter did not ask the boys to stay over night, nor did he offer to accompany them on their perilous journey. They started from his house at early twilight, the wind blowing with such violence as to make it almost impossible to breathe except at intervals, and the snow was so deep and badly drifted that the path they had previously trod could not be followed.

The boys wandered on, soon becoming weary, and the two youngest so thoroughly chilled that they insisted upon going to sleep; but Royal well knew that such a course would prove fatal in a few minutes, and he insisted upon keeping them in motion. Clark was not properly clad for such a storm, but Royal, forgetting his own peril, divested himself of some of his clothing for the benefit of his perishing friend, and almost suffered death himself. By his cheering words and persistent action, the younger boys were kept moving till they had nearly reached Mr. James Streeter's house, where they were met by their fathers, who, feeling alarmed for their safety, had started out to find them.

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\* One of the scholars upon that sled, was Milton W. Streeter, son of Asa, who was sentenced at Worcester, June 14, 1849, to be hanged, for murdering his wife, at Southbridge, Mass., Oct. 23, 1848. This sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life in the State Prison. He was pardoned, Dec. 26, 1864.

The boys were all terribly frozen, and did not attend school any more that winter. Their feet were frozen into their boots; their fingers were stiff and rattled like sticks; their ears were frozen solid, and the whole system so thoroughly chilled that it took a long time to recover. The slightest manifestation of self-interest, or any lack of the most complete fidelity, on the part of Royal, would have made the writing of this sketch impossible; and the sacrifice he made, struggling with elements which had already overcome his companions, deserves to be placed on perpetual record.

During the following May, nearly all the children in the neighborhood were attacked with scarlet fever, and in several cases it proved fatal. Clark had the disease in a mild form at first, but in consequence of improper treatment, or carelessness on his part, he had a relapse, and for several days was not expected to recover. His general health was very much impaired by this attack, and it was several years before his health was completely restored.

From this time onward, until he was 16 years of age, he attended the district school three months in the winter of each year, working to pay his board a part of the time, so as to be nearer the school, it being two and a half miles away. The chances for his becoming interested in the study of books were not very numerous, though some of his wise relatives expressed a suspicion that his winter's schooling might detract from his usefulness as a laborer during



the remainder of the year, and be of no special use to him thereafter. There was a town library at this time in Whitingham, consisting of about 50 volumes, most of which were works upon theological subjects, and not attractive as a source of general information.

In 1841 the Whitingham Academy was erected, a few rods south from the Old Meeting-house, and nearly in front of the Baptist church. It was built by private subscription, and David Jillson Jr. was one of those who contributed for its benefit, extending to it his patronage by sending his son Clark there to school two terms; but it was more than three miles away, and in stormy weather an unpleasant walk. This daily journey, performed alone, gave opportunity for some reflection; but it wandered from the text-book into the realm of hope, where bright visions, with their alluring splendor, soon dissolve into cold, dark, unwelcome, inexorable reality.

Under the stress of these surroundings, this boy received his meagre education, and went out to take his chances with men of wealth and education, poorly equipped for the uncertain conflicts of life.


His father's well meant discipline was so exacting that violation of rule became a rule, and a well conducted whipping was always in order; but it was not an easy task to compel a boy to conform strictly to the sedate habits of mature age, especially when the suppression of generous and liberal ideas became the principal object to be attained; but such was the course pursued in the management of this boy, and

it resulted in total failure. Both parent and child were obstinate, and both were probably wrong in many things. David Jillson, Jr., was not the man to run in channels made by other people, nor was he ever known to work from a pattern. He considered it better to diverge than follow; and the natural inheritance of the son had inclined him to the same opinion. Two such natures could hardly be expected to harmonize, and they never did.

The boy tried to effect an arrangement whereby he might have his time allowed him for the purpose of obtaining a liberal education, offering to pay his way in every other respect, and to make and ratify such contracts as would preclude him from receiving any portion of his father's estate. This proposition was looked upon and treated as absurd, and he was indignantly reminded of the rapidly increasing number of silly young men who were seeking some way to live without work. Failing in this attempt to secure an education, he began to consider in his own mind what should next be done, and finally resolved upon leaving his father's house, for the purpose of making his own way in the world. Those who have never taken such a step may look upon it as a matter of little importance, but this boy took into careful consideration the real surroundings; and the old homestead where the days of his childhood had been spent, and where the associations of youth, so dear to every sensitive heart still lingered, were not abandoned without regret.



On the 13th day of February, 1843, he went away, never to return. This seemingly rash undertaking was not the result of passion or impulse, but had its origin in candid deliberation. It was an undertaking that many a man of more mature years would gladly shrink from. Not only the perils that fall to the common lot of man had to be encountered, but an unworthy effort was made to crush out all progressive aspirations, and compel the young man to go back and be content with what had been to him extremely distasteful. To fill this transaction with terror, his father caused to be published in the Vermont Phoenix, Vol. 9, No. 52, the following notice, prepared by Reuben Winn Esq., who still lives to see the result of his wordy effort to intimidate and oppress a friendless boy:—

 NOTICE is hereby given to the public, that whereas, Clark Jillson, (son of David Jillson Jr., of Whitingham, Vt., being the subscriber hereof,) a minor about eighteen years of age, has without any just provocation left my house and home, and without my consent or permission, being advised and induced by certain mischievous, wicked and evil minded persons, as I have good reason to believe, has absconded and run away, and does not return. Therefore, all persons are hereby notified and forbidden to trust or harbor the said Clark, on my account, as I will pay no charges and extinguish no liabilities of his contracting after this date. And all persons are also forbidden to settle and account to the said Clark for any services that he may hereafter render during his minority, as I hereby give notice that the value of said services, so rendered, of lawful right belong to me.

All persons are also requested not to influence and advise my son Clark not to return to his father's house and be a dutiful and obedient son, for my wish and desire is—as I feel a deep interest in his welfare—that he should return and live with me until he arrives to the full age of twenty-one years.

Dated at Whitingham this 21st day of August, A. D. 1843.	}	DAVID JILLSON JR.
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When this notice was issued Clark was at work for his uncle Stephen, in Charlemont, Mass. This uncle had seen his brother, and they had indulged in high words relating to the employment of the boy, and the payment to him of his wages. Stephen thought the boy was justified in leaving home, and was sufficiently well informed to know that his wages could not be collected twice if they were spent only for the necessities of life. Ten dollars per month from April to October, inclusive, would not permit the purchase of many luxuries; but no further attempt was made to prevent the payment of his wages to him.

After completing the contract with his uncle he engaged to work one year for John Russell & Co., at the Green River Works, near Greenfield, Mass. His principal work was tempering cutlery, an employment requiring good judgment and some skill. He boarded with a Mr. Hastings, near Cheapside, who had two sons, Smead and Obed, both of whom were hafters in the cutlery works. This family believed in the abolition of slavery, and they were always on the alert to disseminate their political creed. Clark had been taught to revere Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, but he soon found himself in full sympathy with the Liberty Party, though not old enough at that time to vote. To these political views he strictly adhered, affiliating with the Republican party from the time it began to exist.

On the first of April, 1845, at the close of his year's service in Greenfield, he visited Whitingham,



where he was taken sick with typhoid fever, about the 10th of April. At that time there was snow upon the ground, and the fields and forests wore the gloom of Winter.

This sickness was a severe one, and for weeks he was not expected to live from one day to another. At one period during this sickness his physician, Dr. Waters Gillett, of Whitingham, gave him from 60 to 80 grains of Calomel each day for 6 days, and on one occasion stated that death would ensue within 12 hours, and that he would try one more experiment. He thereupon proposed to give his patient some Croton oil, and then took from his saddle-bags a small vial supposed to contain that deadly drug, but to his astonishment found that it had evaporated, and he was thus cheated out of a fatal experiment. His patient, though delirious most of the time, remembers this transaction as though it happened but yesterday, and was at that time well aware that he had but a few minutes to live if he took that medicine. The fever had a run of 42 days, leaving him in a very critical condition. It was on the 4th day of July that he first saw through the window the delightful landscape clothed in its blossoming robes. No language can describe the sensation produced by the wonderful change that had taken place, seemingly in a moment, transforming the cold, gray desolation of April, into the bright and beautiful reality of Summer, all Nature smiling with a profusion of bud and blossom, charmed with the song of birds.

Some might imagine that this homeless boy would have been neglected and turned away, as his father had directed, but he happened to be visiting his former friend and school-mate, James P. Eames, whose mother was one of the kindest women that ever lived, and one who would never allow a person to suffer in her presence so long as she could render any assistance. Her daughter Almeda, now Mrs. Royal C. Streeter, was a person of much kindness of heart and of good judgment in the care of the sick, which is generally of more importance than medicine. There was also called to their assistance a young lady by the name of Lydia Corbett, whose fidelity and encouraging words will not be forgotten by the subject of this sketch, though she has long since gone to "That bourne whence no traveller returns." To these four persons he is under lasting obligations; and the relation he bears to them and their memory is far more sacred than common friendship can ever be.

After his recovery he found himself heavily indebted to his physician and those who had been so faithful in caring for him during his sickness; and it seemed necessary to renew his efforts to sustain himself by the labor of his own hands. Hiram Streeter had a friend residing in Auburn, Mass., whom he proposed to visit, and obtain work in that vicinity if possible. Clark agreed to start with him, though his place of destination had not been decided upon. These boys left the residence of Mr. James Streeter,



in Whitingham, on Monday morning, Nov. 10, 1845. One received the farewell blessing of kindred and friends who were ready to give advice and assistance if required; the other was dependent upon his own courage and the mysterious workings of Fate. They pursued their course on foot, carrying with them all the goods and chattels they possessed. The bundle was not large, but after a tramp of 20 miles they reached Greenfield, Mass., late in the afternoon, somewhat weary. They stayed at the hotel over night, and early the next morning, upon mature deliberation, concluded to take the stage for Worcester. This seemed rather extravagant, but they thought it would hardly pay to spend their time to walk. They reached Barre about noon, and the other passengers took a regular dinner, what would now be called a "square meal," but these boys being obliged to practice economy, did not indulge in any luxury except a "cold bite." The stage arrived at the Foster street depot in Worcester, at 4 o'clock P. M., just as the cars were starting for Boston.

These boys had never seen a railroad before, and a brief inspection of the rolling stock was deemed advisable. Clark proposed to take the train for Boston which he thought would give opportunity to look things over, but Hiram was decidedly opposed to that kind of an expedition, and finally they concluded to remain in Worcester over night. They stayed at the Central hotel, located where the Bay State House now stands.

In the morning the boys separated, Hiram going to Auburn, and Clark looking for work in Worcester, which he was fortunate enough to find during the day, at the machine shop of Howe and Goddard on Union street. Here he commenced work Nov. 13th, 1845. His compensation was to be 75 cents per day, without board. This was not a very brilliant start, but to one who had no other means of support, and among entire strangers, it was better than nothing. He boarded on the westerly side of Spring street in the brick house then occupied by a Mr. Bartlett and his mother, who formerly lived at Chicopee.

He remained in this place but a short time before he obtained work at the carriage shop of Tolman & Russell, on Exchange street, where he remained till the autumn of 1848, when he went to work at New Worcester, in the shop of Moses Clement, which stood on the site now occupied by the wrench manufactory of Loring Coes Esq. Mr. Clement was a manufacturer of shear blades and straw cutter knives. Mr. Jillson's experience at Greenfield made him well qualified for tempering blades; and he built the first furnace for that purpose ever seen in Worcester.

After working about two years for Mr. Clement he obtained employment in the wrench manufactory of Messrs. L. & A. G. Coes, near Webster Square.—His work here was turning wrench handles, and several valuable improvements in the manner of doing this work were made by him, some of which are in use at the present time.



While Mr. Jillson was residing in New Worcester his leisure hours were spent in writing for various publications, and at one time he was a regular contributor to thirty papers and magazines. On the 3d day of March, 1853, he delivered a Poem before the Worcester County Mechanics' Association at the City Hall, in Worcester. In 1853 he was President of the Young Men's Rhetorical Society of Worcester, and delivered the Annual Address on the 26th day of December. In May, 1854, he moved to Southbridge, Mass., where he became one of the editors of the Southbridge Press, and where he was nominated as a candidate for the Legislature, but not having been a resident of the town long enough into a few days to meet the requirements of the constitution, another person was nominated and elected.

On the 11th day of April, 1855, he was married at Worcester, by Rev. Horace James, to Miss Ruth Elizabeth Lilley, who was born in Oxford, Mass., April 29th, 1825. They remained in Southbridge till the last of Nov., 1855, when they returned to Worcester where they have since resided.

Their children are, Lewis Lilley, born July 13th, 1860; Franklin Campbell, born January 28th, 1864; Mary, born January 23d, 1866. Lewis died suddenly of scarlet fever, Jan. 21st, 1870.

Up to 1860 Mr. Jillson was engaged in mechanical pursuits, having at that time and since obtained a large number of patents, about twenty in all, some of which have been extensively used.



The first machine made for reducing wire in the manufacture of sewing machine needles was one of his inventions. In 1868 he was making experiments in the manner of heating buildings by conveying steam or hot air from some central point to all the buildings within a given distance.

On the 20th day of Feb., 1860, he was appointed by Gov. Banks, Clerk of the Police Court of Worcester; and on the 10th of April was commissioned as Justice of the Peace, an office he now holds. The office of Clerk having been made elective, he was elected to that office by vote of the city of Worcester in 1861, and in 1866. In 1871 he resigned the office of Clerk, and accepted that of Chief Justice of the First District Court of Southern Worcester, and in 1872 he was appointed Trial Justice of Juvenile offenders, and re-appointed in 1875.

He was elected and served as Mayor of the city of Worcester in 1873, 1875 and 1876, and was the first Mayor who exercised the veto power in Worcester, as well as the first under whose administration the city debt had been reduced for 13 years.

He was the first President of the Sons and Daughters of Vermont, and delivered before that Society the first Annual Address, on the 10th of Feb. 1874. On the 21st day of June, 1878, he read a Poem before the Alumni and School of Nichols Academy, at Dudley, Mass., and on the 10th of Oct. he delivered the Annual Address before the North River Agricultural Society in his native town.

July, 15th, 1879, he delivered an Address before the New Hampshire Antiquarian Society at Contoocook, upon "New Hampshire and Vermont: their Unions Secessions and Disunions."

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